



Background image: Felicity Crawshaw.

Green and pleasant

AUGUST is usually one of the hottest months of the year meaning lots of watering required. Try to use grey water wherever possible, your water butts may be running low despite lots of rain this year. August is traditionally holiday-time, so you might need to enlist the help of friends and family to look after the garden while you are away. When you are at home, take the time to prune Wisteria and summer-flowering shrubs such as lavender once they've finished flowering.

By **Geoff Stonebanks**

Most flowers lose their attraction as they fade, thereby spoiling the overall appearance of your beds, borders and containers. Not only does regular deadheading improve the appearance, it also directs energy into stronger growth and more flowers. Once the flowers are pollinated, seed heads, pods or capsules will form at the expense of further growth and flower development.

Summer pond care

Ponds are a lovely addition to any garden and can provide a rich habitat for a range of wildlife. However, without care they can soon become an eyesore with overgrown plants, weeds and water that is unhealthy for fish and other wildlife. Occasional cleaning

and regular maintenance are required. Water evaporates during windy or hot weather, leading to the water level dropping. The reduced surface area can be damaging for fish, as there's less oxygen available, so top up the pond if necessary. Ideally use rainwater from a butt. If you do have to use tap water and you keep fish, add the tap water gradually in small amounts to prevent the cold liquid shocking the fish in the pond. Installing a water feature to keep the surface bubbling gently is generally a good idea. Floating weeds can quickly cover the surface of a pond if left unchecked, so swirl these out with a stick or use a net to scoop them out. Leave weeds and algae on the side of the pond overnight, so that larger creatures can return to the water.

National Garden Scheme

How about becoming part of history in 2027? *The National Garden Scheme* is calling for more

exceptional gardens to open in their 100th year, 2027. Dr Richard Claxton, Chief Executive of the scheme says "If your garden is packed with quality, character and interest, and is admired by friends and family we would love to hear from you." The charity is inviting garden owners across the county to open their gates in 2027 to celebrate the landmark centenary year. Founded in 1927 to support district nurses, the Scheme has spent a century transforming private passion into public good.

Dr Claxton adds: "Whether you have an historic estate with rolling acres, a country cottage, an enthusiastic village of gardeners, a tiny urban sanctuary, or community allotments, we're asking garden owners across Sussex to help raise vital funds for some of the UK's leading health and nursing charities and to make 2027 a record-breaking year."

So, why consider opening in 2027? Well, you'd be joining a legacy by becoming a part of a uniquely British tradition that began with King George V opening the gardens at Sandringham in the inaugural 1927 season.

Additionally, you'd be supporting essential health charities across the UK too. Whether your space is a wildlife haven, a productive veg plot, or a country idyll, the primary criteria are quality, character, and interest. So, if you think this might be you, prospective garden owners should contact the local Sussex County Organiser as soon as possible to arrange a time to visit during the current growing season.

In East Sussex, the organiser is Irene Eltringham-Willson. You can reach her at irene.willson@btinternet.com or on **01323 833770**.

All gardens must complete their official registration by mid-September to be included in the centenary publications. The centenary is a celebration of the generosity of garden owners over the last 100 years." By opening your garden in 2027, you won't be just sharing a beautiful space – you will be providing a lifeline for nursing and health charities that need our support more than ever."

I have been opening my own garden, *Driftwood*, for the scheme since 2011 and have loved every minute of it. You will soon get a passion for sharing your plot with others. For more information on how to open your garden visit the dedicated page on their website www.ngs.org.uk

This month, you could visit *Butlers Farmhouse* in Butlers Lane, Herstmonceux on the 22nd and 23rd, from 2pm to 5pm for £8, where there will be live jazz in the garden. You can take your own picnic, along with a chair or rug, to sit and listen to the music in the meadow. *Limekiln Farm* in Chalvington will open on the 29th and 30th from 2pm to 5pm and entry is £8 as well.

Read more of Geoff's garden at www.driftwoodbysea.co.uk or follow both him and the garden on social media.

Geoff is a member of the Garden Media Guild and multi-award-winning garden owner, garden writer & broadcaster. *Driftwood* has appeared twice on BBC2 *Gardeners' World* and was a finalist in *Gardeners' World Magazine Best Small Space*. See the amazing 5-star reviews on TripAdvisor. Read all about Geoff's work for the community, appointment as a Coronation Champion and trips to Buckingham Palace including two Royal Garden Parties, in 2018 and 2023. Read the many published features on the garden in national, local and worldwide media, including TV.